

REMARKS

The present amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed April 1, 2005, in which Claims 1-5, 10-11, and 14-16 were rejected and Claims 6-9, 12, 13, and 17-20 were objected to. Applicant has reviewed the outstanding Office Action including the Examiner's remarks and the references cited therein. The following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action and, when coupled with the above amendments, are believed to render the claims at issue patentable. Favorable reconsideration is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 7, 10-12, 14, 16, and 18 are amended, and Claims 6 and 17 are cancelled. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added and that the originally filed specification, drawings, and claims support the amendments.

Claim Objections

According to the Office Action, Claim 14 was objected to because the number "20" should not be in the second to last line of the claim.

In response, Claim 14 is appropriately corrected to delete the number "20" in the second to last line of the claim.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

According to the Office Action, Claims 1-4, 10, and 14-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of *Ellwood et al.* (U.S. Patent 5,879,810).

In response, Claims 1 and 14 are amended to add the feature of Claim 6 and 17 to include the step of utilizing a prefixing material in the claimed manner. In addition,

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the repeated Claims 6 and 17 are therefore cancelled. Furthermore, Claims 7, 10-12, 16, and 18 are also amended. Applicant submits no new matter has been added.

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 14 are allowable over the prior art of record. In addition, Claims 2-5, 7-13, 15-16, and 18-20 depend on Claims 1 and 14 respectively and add further limitations thereto, are also allowable over the cited references.

Accordingly, in view of the invention as a whole, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-4, 10, and 14-15 are not obvious in view of the cited references and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Now that the rejections in the Office Action have been overcome, expedited passage of the application to issue is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner indicated that Claims 6-9, 12-13, and 17-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Based on the above amendment, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-5, 7-16, and 18-20 are in form of allowance.

CONCLUSION

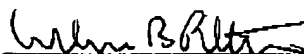
In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims as currently presented are in condition for allowance and hereby respectfully requests reconsideration. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to pass the case to issue at the earliest convenience.

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Applicant has reviewed the art cited but not relied upon by the Examiner. Applicant has concluded that these references do not affect the patentability of the claims as currently presented.

Respectfully submitted,



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